

English 1013

Researching the Novel

Step One:

Find some background information about your author and your novel

Reference Materials

Electronic Reference

[Credo Reference Database](#)

A virtual reference section for getting background information on almost any topic

[Literary Reference Center](#)

Has biographical information and background information on many works of literature. Put in your search terms, such as your novel title, author name, literary genre, or a character from your novel.

[Literature Resource Center](#)

Has biographical information and background information on many works of literature. Put in your search terms (such as your novel title or author name), then click on the tabs "Topic and Work Overviews" and "Biographies".

Print Reference (a selection)

If you are unable to find enough information in the above electronic reference databases, we would be happy to see if there is something in our print reference section that may be helpful.

Contemporary Literary Criticism -- **REF 809.046 C767**

The Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Literature -- **REF 820.9 M862I**

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism -- **REF 809.04 T914**

American Writers; A Collection of Literary Biographies -- **REF 810.9 Am35**

Literature and its Times: Profiles of 300 Notable Literary Works --**REF 809.93358 L712**

The Internet

You may also be able to find some information about your author and novel online. However, you should use caution when you cite sources found on the web in your paper.

Use the [Evaluating Websites page](#) and [rubric](#) to decide whether the website you find is a good source for your research paper or not.

Step Two:

Begin to locate some sources that contain literary criticism. (This will help you refine your topic and choose a thesis.)

Databases

[Literary Reference Center](#)

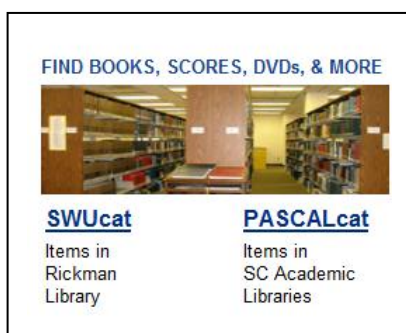
Has biographical information and background information on many works of literature. Put in your search terms, such as your novel title, author name, literary genre, or a character from your novel.

[Literature Resource Center](#)

Has essays of literary criticism on many works of literature. Put in your search terms (such as your novel title or author name), then click on the tab that says "Literature Criticism".

Books

Start at www.swu.edu/library and click on [SWUcat](#) or [PASCALcat](#). For [SWUcat](#), you may request books from Rickman Library and have them sent to your house. Use the [ILL Book Form](#) to do this. For [PASCALcat](#), you may request books to be sent to the closest academic library to you. (Note: we regret that at this time we cannot have books located via [PASCALcat](#) delivered to your Learning Center)



- **Search by Author Name**
- **Search by Novel Title**
- **Search by subject**

Step Three:

Locate some journal and/or periodical/magazine articles that further support your thesis and topic.

Periodical/Articles

Start with:

- [Academic Search Complete](#)

Then try:

- [JSTOR](#)
- [MLA International Bibliography](#)

Book Reviews

- [Academic Search Complete](#)
- [Book Review Index Online Plus](#)

- In these databases, you will find both scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles, magazine articles, AND book reviews.
- If you have questions about deciding which type of source you have located, please talk to your professor or contact the library.
- Use the same kinds of search terms you used to locate background information and books. You may want to also add in words that relate to your thesis or topic, such as "symbolism", "plot", "class", or "adultery."

As always, the librarians are very happy to help you with your research needs! Contact us at 864-644-5060, library@swu.edu, or the live chat box on our [website](#).